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6 March 1957

MEMORANDUM FOR THE BOARD OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

1. An FCDA proposal for a $32 billion shelter program is scheduled for discussion by the NSC on 4 April. In preparing its recommendations for the NSC, the Planning Board has requested by 19 March an intelligence estimate of the foreign reaction to the initiation by the US of such a program.

2. The following features of the FCDA proposal are pertinent:

(a) Expenditures would be phased over an eight year period, reaching a peak of $8 billion in 1963 and tapering off to $6 billion in the final year -- 1965;

(b) Fall-out shelters to accomodate 63 million persons would cost $6.8 billion; combined blast and fall-out shelters for 100 million persons would cost 23.5 billion. (This allows for duplicate shelters for 20% of the people.)

3. It can be assumed that in order to obtain Congressional and public support it would be necessary for the US executive branch to make a convincing case - in public statements and testimony - that the chances of general war, particularly when the ICBM becomes

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operational , were great enough to warrant a program of this magnitude.

4. It is further assumed that there would be no compensating reductions in US expenditures for active defense.

5. In the light of these facts and assumptions, the Planning Board requirement can be met by a brief paper responsive to the following questions:

(a) What briefly are present and projected Soviet shelter programs (elaboration of para. 12 of the 29 January FCDA memo to the Planning Board)?

(b) How would the USSR, the major US allies, and the major neutral countries interpret the initiation of such a program by the US? In particular, would they believe that the US had concluded that general war was inevitable? That the US was preparing to initiate general war?

(c) Would the initiation of such a program cause these countries to take actions which would significantly affect US security? In particular, would the USSR be more likely to take actions which would increase the likelihood of general war? Would US alliances be significantly affected? Would US relations with the neutral countries be affected?

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